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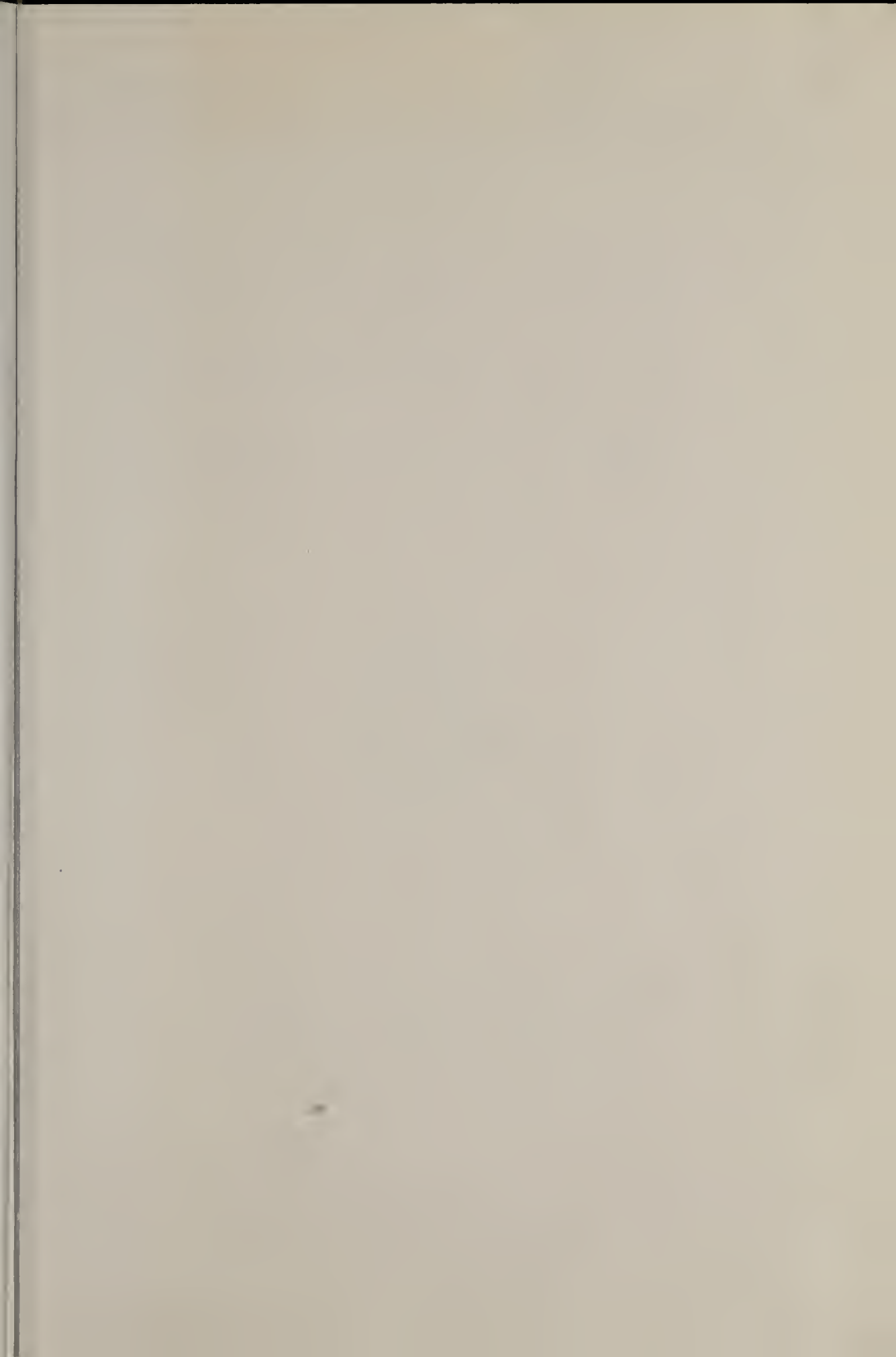
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The Great Great  
Grandfather of  
Your Land Title



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Roger Williams

*Most of the Land Titles in Rhode Island started "clean" because of the influence of Roger Williams who, in addition to being a great friend of the Indians, was the apostle of fair play in all instances where the whites purchased land from the red men.*







## Are you Narragansett or Wampanoag ?

*This map will give you a good general idea as to the original source of your land title. If your property is located at the right of the heavy dotted line your title probably started with Massasoit (sometimes known as Ousamequin) Chief of the Wampanoags. If it lies at the left, the first deed turning it over to the white men was in all likelihood executed by Canonicus and Miantonomo or by some of their subject Sachems.*





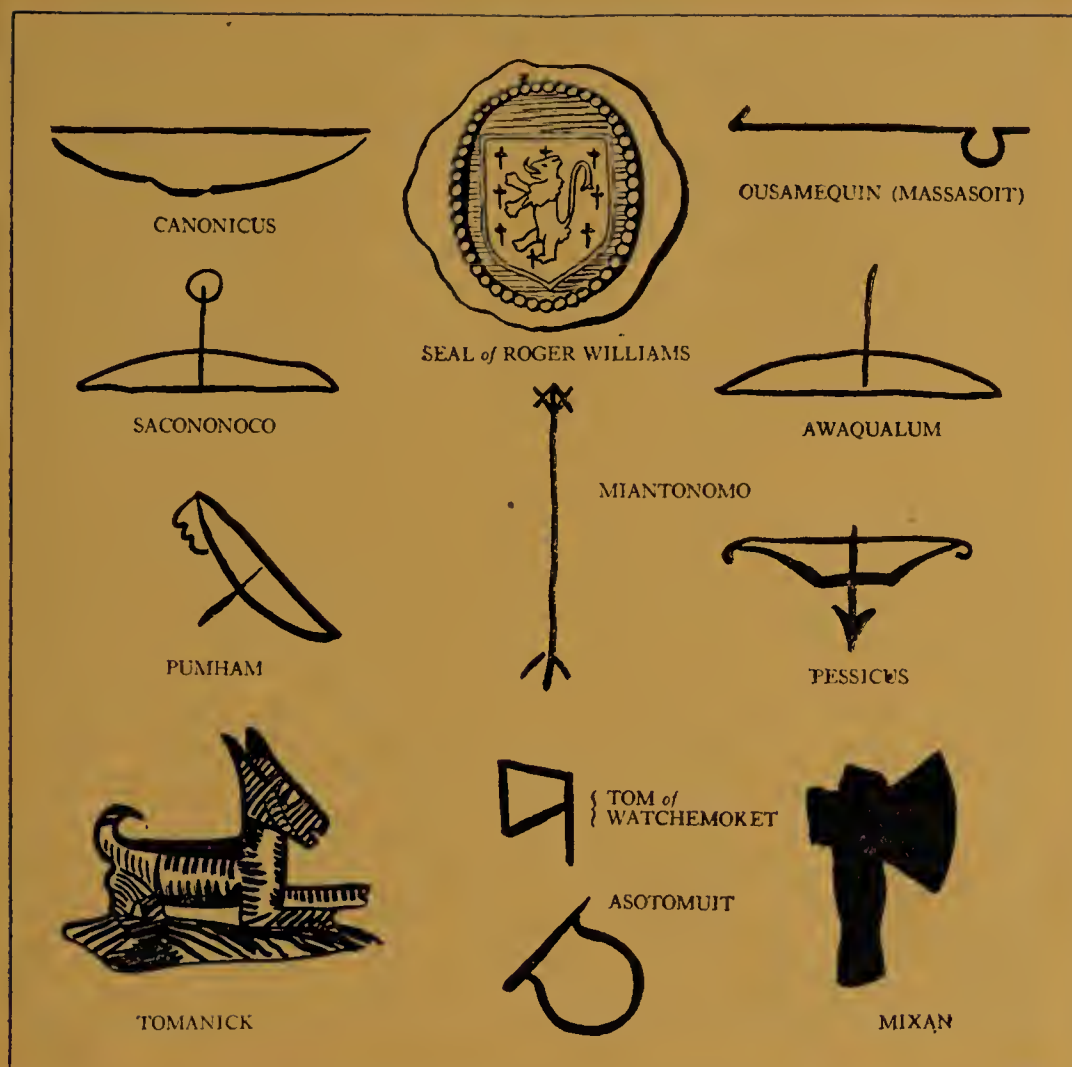




## “The Great-Great-Grandfather of your Land Title”

*Roger Williams and those who believed, as he did, that when land was bought from the Indians there should be a fair bargain between friends, tried whenever they could to have everything “ship-shape” through the signing of a properly drawn document. The Indian sellers and their witnesses signed these deeds with interesting “picture writing.” (See page 15.)*





## Roger Williams' Seal and Indian "Signatures"

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*Indian "signatures." These were not "marks" made because the Indians could not write. They were real signatures. Doubtless the modern handwriting expert can find in them identifying characteristics as strong as those of the best penman of our day.*

Some of the prices paid to the Indians are both interesting and amusing in the light of modern land values. Seldom did coined money change hands, for to the natives at that time gold and silver meant little or nothing. Their own money, "wampum-peag", sometimes appears as full or part payment, but in the main the "medium of exchange" ran all the way from such useful things as blankets, axes, cloth and hoes, through a strange assortment of old military coats and brass jewelry — to sundry "jugges of strong water."

The method followed by the Indians in signing those deeds (such as were not mere spoken agreements before witnesses) is also interesting. We too readily jump to the conclusion that these red men could not write, because they "made their marks" instead of writing their names in English letters. Of course, the deeds were written in English and read to the Sachems by some trusted interpreter (often Roger Williams himself), but the Indians could write their own "picture language," and it was with pictures that they signed their names. We show on page 15 the signatures of Massasoit, Canonicus, Miantonomo and several others among the "real estate owners" of the Narragansett and Wampanoag tribes.

So it was—in the main by fair exchange—that the soil passed in great sections over to the newcomers. Then the further division of the land began, starting "chains of title" that have multiplied until today on the Rhode Island records there are thousands of title-chains and hundreds of thousands of land transactions recorded.

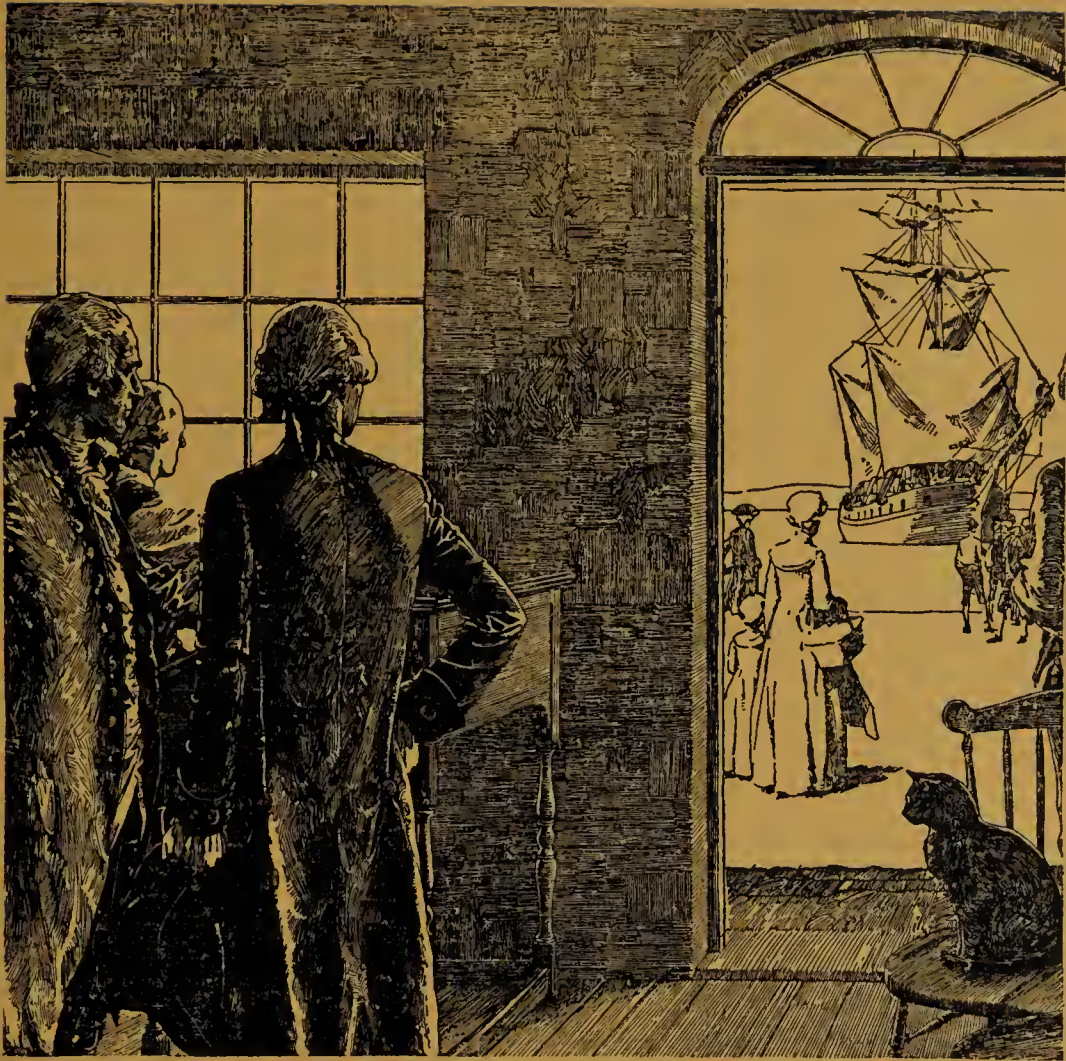
This breaking up of the land started with grants from Williams and other first buyers to companions and to later comers who were taken into the newly settled towns. Immense areas were, in this way, divided into "towne lots," farms and woodland holdings.



## When Rhode Island Towns became Seaports

*It was the coming of maritime trade to Rhode Island that brought about the first marked division of the land into plots similar to what we now refer to as "house lots". Up to that time Rhode Island towns were mainly the places where farmers, tilling the outlying lands, came together to live for purposes of mutual protection. The people, however, were not really "town people" and many of the town lots were small farms in themselves.*





## The Growth of the East India Trade

*At first the shipping of the Rhode Island towns was purely of a coastwise nature. The ships were small, — hardly to be called ships at all. Later the trade with the West Indies and Europe developed, and then the "tall ships" of Narragansett Bay began sailing to the fabled East Indies and around the world. This growth brought in more and more town dwellers, and the breaking up of the land into small plots went on, with a constant piling up of chains of title and the flaws that inevitably accompany them, even in our time.*





## The "Stage Coach Days" brought real Town-life

*Thriving settlements of ship yards, docks, warehouses, inns, churches, stores and small manufactories where most of the work was done by hand, — such were the Rhode Island villages that existed when Samuel Slater started his little cotton mill in Pawtucket, harnessed water power for the operation of his wonderful looms, and set the ball of American Industry rolling. In his wake came a great concentration of people in the towns where manufacturing had its foothold, and a greater than ever splitting up of the land into smaller and smaller pieces.*





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